



2007 Legislative Priorities

Tuition Support

As the primary means for meeting school operating expenses, tuition support remains the top budget priority for K-12 education. Though annual growth in state tuition support has averaged about 4 percent historically, the state's recent economic downturn resulted in lower-than-average tuition support appropriations. With increasing signs that Indiana's finances are improving, IDOE requests that tuition support be adjusted accordingly.

Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK)

FDK has a proven academic benefit and is widely recognized as among the best ways to close the achievement gap. A recent school survey revealed a large statewide demand for FDK: fully funded for every school, voluntary for every parent and high quality for every student. Though an immediate expansion to all schools would be ideal, IDOE supports the Governor's plan to phase-in FDK over three years, beginning with all students from low-income families.

Public Law 221 Support

When P.L. 221 was passed by the General Assembly in 1999, Indiana's comprehensive accountability law was intended to provide both assistance for low-performing schools and rewards for high-performing schools, but no funding was provided. IDOE is currently using existing resources to support school improvement, but additional state dollars are needed to meet the expectation set by P.L. 221.

Mentoring

The costs associated with teacher turnover are considerable, and research shows that a strong, structured mentoring program helps retain many of these teachers. State funding to support Indiana's successful mentor program was not provided for the 2005-06 school year. Due to the critical role mentors play in developing high-quality educators, IDOE requests that this funding be restored.

Best Practices

State leaders, school officials and students alike will benefit from the creation of a new Division of Best Practices, which will fulfill three supporting roles aimed at promoting needed departmental, district and student improvement: Planning and Policy Development, Special Projects Management and Grants and Alternative Resources.

Financial Management

The State Board of Education recently adopted a plan to upgrade the Financial Management, Analysis and Reporting System (or FinMARS) for Indiana's school corporations and schools as required under IC 21-10. The goal is to provide a common financial data management system for Indiana school corporations. In addition to reducing costs and increasing efficiency, this system will enhance data transparency and on-demand reporting for schools, policymakers and the public.

Data Warehouse

IDOE plans to build a centralized data repository solution to improve current methods for data submission. This "data warehouse" will enable IDOE to better report and analyze a variety of information related to student learning and school performance, resulting in more efficient and accurate federal, state and local data reporting.

Visit www.doe.state.in.us for IDOE's complete biennial budget request.